THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI PON. RADHAKIRISHNAN): (a) to (d) A letter was received by Prime Minister's Office in November, 2002 from Shri S.K. Dubey, the then Manager (Tech.), Gaya in the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). The letter was unsigned, particulars of Shri S.K. Dubey was attached in a separate sheet which was also unsigned. The letter pointed perceived deficiencies and irregularities in implementation of the National Highways Development Project (NHDP). Anonymous or improperly identified letters are not to be acted upon as per the Central Vigilance Commission guidelines. However, since Shri Dubey's letter carried an annexure that gave his name and address and it made seemingly important observations on the implementation of the NHDP, the letter was passed on to NHAI through Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, to deal with the issues mentioned therein. The passing on of the letter within the Governmental system does not constitute 'breach of confidentiality'. Infact, neither Ministry of Road Transport and Highways nor NHAI disclosed the identity of Shri S.K. Dubey in any manner. The motive behind the murder of Shri S.K. Dubey and the culprit will be known only after completion of the investigation.

Withdrawal of ban on imported items

†1849. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government's decision to withdraw ban on the import of hundreds of items proved to be devastating for the Small Scale Industries;

(b) if so, whether any assessment of the devastation has been made;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) Government is constantly assessing and monitoring the impact of the removal of Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) and WTO Agreements on the economy including the Small Scale Industries (SSIs) in the country. Though removal of QRs have exposed the SSIs to a greater competition, yet the SSI sector has continued to grow. However, even after the removal of QRs, protection to

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

the industries is available in the form of raising custom duties upto the bound levels, imposing anti-dumping duties, taking safeguards measures in case of surge in imports, etc.

(d) In view of (a) to (c), the question does not arise.

Effect of liberalisation on SSIs

1850. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have carried out any study to identify the sections of Small Scale Industries which have been adversely affected by liberalization of import regime mandated by WTO;

(b) if so, what are details of such a study; and

(c) what action, Government propose to take to save these industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) The Government has carried out studies to identify the impact of WTO on SSI sectors. The main issues for the SSIs emerging out of these studies are inadequacy of credit, technological obsolecence, marketing problem, poor quality, lack of standards conforming to international standards, poor infrastructure, etc.

(c) The Government has put in place several measures to help SSIs become globally competitive. These include special focus on areas such as technology upgradation, infrastructure assistance through cluster approach, timely availability of credit, adoption of modern management practices, use of electronic infrastructure and other IT applications to face the emerging challenges of trade liberalization. A comprehensive policy package for the development of SSIs announced on 30th August, 2000 serves to enhance the competitiveness of SSIs through easier access to credit, availability of collateral free composite loan upto Rs. 25 lakhs, capital subsidy for technology upgradation and improved infrastructure.

Unfinished projects

1851. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state: